

Writing Grade 7

Writing is a critical skill for effective communication. Whether you are writing an email message, a personal letter, an ad for your business, or a formal report for school or work, being able to express your ideas clearly to your audience is important. Becoming a good writer is not easy. It takes effort and the development of a variety of skills: clear ideas, organization, a voice that holds the interest of your audience, and a consistent control of language, including word choice, sentence structure, and conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization). With new technology, it is possible to electronically communicate in writing with people all over the world in a matter of minutes. Writing will continue to be a communication skill that is required in most professions and workplace environments. Acquiring effective written communication skills will enhance both your personal and professional opportunities.

About the Test

You will be expected to write one extended writing piece on a specific topic. This writing test will be completed in one session, so all steps in the writing process including revising, editing, and writing a final copy will be done in that one session. The test should take approximately 2-3 hours to complete. An example of scored student responses to a sample writing prompt are included on pages 12-22. These may help you prepare for the test. A copy of the Official Scoring Guide is also included at the end of this guide.

Hints for Taking AIMS DPA Writing

Prior to the test

- Read the four sample student responses to the prompt on the following pages. Note strengths and weaknesses in the paper as you read. Does the writer accomplish the task? Is the writer's message clear? Are the ideas supported with convincing evidence and support? Are the ideas organized so that you can logically follow them? Is the voice appropriate? Did the writer carefully choose words that are clear and convincing? Do the sentences have a natural flow? Is the paper carefully edited?
- Discuss with other students and your teacher why one paper is stronger or more convincing than another. Refer to the Official Scoring Guide when you analyze the sample papers and scores.
- Practice writing a persuasive response to this sample prompt. Score your own paper using the Official Scoring Guide to determine what your strengths are, and then work on areas you need to improve to be a more effective writer.

During the test

- Listen to directions, read the prompt carefully, and be sure you understand the purpose before beginning to write.
- Take time to organize your thoughts before you begin to write. For the extended writing prompt, you may want to create a graphic organizer (outline, web, chart, map, cluster, etc.) to plan and organize your ideas.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to revise your work using the checklist provided. Keep in mind the six traits (characteristics) of effective writing.
- Edit your writing carefully. Your audience (the reader) needs to be able to understand the ideas you are expressing without being hindered by spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar mistakes that interfere with the message. **You must be sure your handwriting is legible. Printing your work is acceptable; however, be sure to distinguish between upper-and lower-case letters. Do not print in all capital letters.**

Keep in mind...

- You will be given two pages in the answer document to write your final copy. It is important that you take advantage of the two pages you are given to develop your ideas fully. This is your opportunity to demonstrate how well you can write.
- Your final copy needs to be handwritten in the answer document (not done on a computer).
- You may use a dictionary or thesaurus as a reference during the Extended Writing Response portion of the test.
- Be conscious of the traits, or characteristics, of effective writing (idea development, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions) no matter what kind of writing you are asked to do. The same scoring guide, or rubric, will be used for all the types of writing you may be asked to compose: narrative, persuasive, expository, or functional communication.

The following four examples illustrate the scoring performed for the AIMS DPA Writing.

The first example is scored as “**Falls Far Below.**”

The second example is scored as “**Approaches.**”

The third example is scored as “**Meets.**”

The fourth example is scored as “**Exceeds.**”

Sample writing prompt:

Going to the movies is a major source of entertainment for many students. Imagine that the only discount movie theater in your area is closing.

Write a persuasive essay in support of keeping the discount movie theater open.

This is the Writer's Checklist you will see on the Grade 6 AIMS DPA Writing test. Practice using it when writing to revise your rough draft before writing your final copy. If you take the time to use it carefully, it will help you write a better paper.

Writer's Checklist

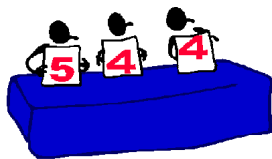
- My paper has a specific audience and a specific purpose.
- My paper contains a strong, controlling idea.
- My paper stays on topic.
- My paper includes specific and relevant details, reasons, and examples.
- My paper has an effective beginning, middle, and end.
- My paper progresses in a logical order, and my ideas flow smoothly.
- My paper contains words that make it interesting.
- My paper contains sentences that are clear and varied in structure.
- My paper includes effective use of paragraphing.
- My paper includes correct grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Sample 1

Writing

FINAL COPY

At the movie theater it cost a lot of money to get a ticket. But at the discount movie theater it doesn't cost as much. Every body should be able to see a movie. At the discount movie theater, every body is able to because it doesn't cost as much. The discount movie theater has every thing a regular movie theater has. So lets keep the discount movie theater open.



Score Sheet for Writing Sample 1

Prompt:

Going to the movies is a major source of entertainment for many students.
Imagine that the only discount movie theater in your area is closing.

Write a persuasive essay in support of keeping the discount movie theater open.

Paper Falls Far Below the standard

<i>Ideas & Content</i> 6 5 4 3 (2) 1	<i>Organization</i> 6 5 4 3 (2) 1	<i>Voice</i> 6 5 4 3 (2) 1
<i>Word Choice</i> 6 5 4 3 (2) 1	<i>Sentence Fluency</i> 6 5 4 3 (2) 1	<i>Conventions</i> 6 5 4 (3) 2 1

The underlined passages are taken from the *Official Scoring Guide for AIMS Writing* (Six Trait Rubric). Papers are original samples of Arizona student writing. Identifying information has been removed.

Ideas and Content: Main purpose is somewhat unclear; development is attempted but minimal. The writing has repetition of detail (cost). Purpose may require inferences by the reader. **Score point is 2.**

Organization: The writing lacks a clear organizational structure. The paper has a missing or extremely undeveloped beginning, body, and ending. The piece is too short to demonstrate organizational skills. **Score point is 2.**

Voice: The writing provides little sense of involvement or commitment. There is little or no hint of the writer behind the words. The last sentence shows a hint of conviction, but it is too little, too late. **Score point is 2.**

Word Choice: Language is monotonous. Images are absent. The end of the paragraph hints at persuasion, but the words are flat. **Score point is 2.**

Sentence Fluency: The writing tends to be choppy. The writer's sentences are monotonous because they are repetitious in content and structure. **Score point is 2.**

Conventions: The writer demonstrates limited control of standard writing conventions. The brief text does show control over basic conventions. The text is too simple to reveal mastery. **Score point is 3.**

Sample 2

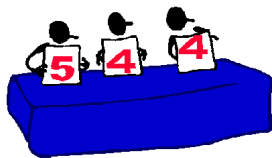
Writing

FINAL COPY

The Discount Movie Theater is Closing

We must do something to stop this from happening, we have to bring in more business into the D.M.T. or it will close permanently and then we will not be able to view our favorite new movie for the discount price of \$3.99 so if you want to save our movie theater from closing we must take immediate action so when you get home from school invite your friends over and make posters and banners and put them up around town and even in near by towns. Put them on people's windshields, up on light poles and up on all local bulletin boards around town, put them in people's mailboxes and in newspaper racks and anywhere else you think people might see it, try to attract as much attention to the movie theater and invite your family and get anyone and everyone to come to the movie theater on Friday, the day before it closes, and hopefully we will raise enough money to keep the movie theater in business so we can watch the movies we want to see. So please help out and go to the movies on Friday to keep the discount movie theater alive and in business. Thank You.

Sincerely, C
K



Score Sheet for Writing Sample 2

Prompt:

Going to the movies is a major source of entertainment for many students.
Imagine that the only discount movie theater in your area is closing.

Write a persuasive essay in support of keeping the discount movie theater open.

Paper Approaches the standard

Ideas & Content

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

Organization

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

Voice

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

Word Choice

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

Sentence Fluency

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

Conventions

6 5 4 (3) 2 1

The underlined passages are taken from the *Official Scoring Guide for AIMS Writing* (Six Trait Rubric). Papers are original samples of Arizona student writing. Identifying information has been removed.

Ideas and Content: The reader can understand the main ideas. The writer tends to offer developmental details that are often limited, uneven, and overly general. Details are not well-grounded in credible sources. The strategies to keep the theater open are fragmented and not clearly presented. There is no connection between the flyers and Friday; the reader must infer that they are related. **Score point is 3.**

Organization: An attempt has been made to organize the writing. There is a beginning and an ending which, although present, are undeveloped and too obvious. The use of “so” as a transitional device is overdone. **Score point is 3.**

Voice: A sense of the writer emerges at times; however the voice in inappropriately personal. The writer has a limited sense of audience. There is a tone of persuasion (“We must do something...”); however, it is not clearly presented. **Score point is 3.**

Word Choice: Language is quite ordinary, lacking interest, precision, and variety. The writer uses words that work, but rarely capture the reader’s interest. Again, the vocabulary employed is mundane and not specific to the purpose. **Score point is 3.**

Sentence Fluency: Occasional awkward constructions force the reader to slow down. The overlong, awkward sentence that begins the paper (“we must do something...in nearby towns.”) does not invite fluid reading. **Score point is 3.**

Conventions: The writer demonstrates limited control of standard writing conventions. Errors begin to impede readability. The paper has one paragraph that would better enhance the message if it were properly segmented. **Score point is 3.**

Sample 3A

Writing

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A multitude of people work at Discount Flicks, a discount movie theater in a small town called Pintoville. The town governors have just decided to close the theater and replace it with a mall shopping center. Just think, loads of people will be losing their jobs and many others will not have an inexpensive theater to go to. Would it be right to go ahead and close the theater without consulting the people first?

One main reason people are getting so upset about Discount Flicks closing is because they don't want to lose their jobs. Without a job, what would support their families? Plus there are not many openings for jobs in the small town of Pintoville. Another main reason people don't want Discount Flicks to close is because for many people, this is a main source of entertainment on weekends, or on days off. It is a very inexpensive movie theater and if it closes, that leaves only one movie theater, whose prices range high. "Discount Flicks gets my family's business continuously, along with a number of our friends," says Deborah Whick, a teacher at Skell Elementary in Pintoville. A majority of Pintoville's residents say they go to Discount Flicks more than any other source of entertainment, and would really hate to see it go.

Many town residents want to hold a town meeting with the governors to try and resolve any problems concerning the closing of Discount Flicks. They think that maybe by telling the governors how they feel, they may be able to reason with them and resolve the closing of the theater. Many would also be

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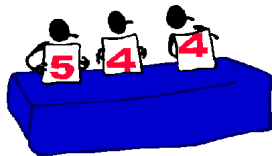
Go On 

Writing**FINAL COPY**

willing to take matters farther than the town's hands and into the state's. "I don't know how far we'll have to go, but I'm willing to support Discount Flicks all the way to the end," stated Mr. William B., assistant manager of Discount Flicks.

However not all of Pville disagrees with the closing of Discount Flicks. Many say the new mini shopping center would be a nice thing to have in such a small town. There also aren't that many leisurely shopping centers in Pville and some residents fully agree with the closing of Discount Flicks. More reasons have been stated also, "In my spare time, I never go see a movie, to me they're just a waste of time. Instead I think going shopping would be more productive," states Sarah B., a town resident.

In conclusion, the question, "Would it be right to close Discount Flicks without consenting the people first?" is simply answered no, even though some may disagree, majority rules, especially if it's a very large majority. The town governors and residents should hold a meeting and come to an agreement. Because the majority of Pville disagrees with the closing of Discount Flicks, it would only be fair if opposing sides would discuss matters carefully and come to a better conclusion, saving the closing of Discount Flicks.



Score Sheet for Writing Sample 3

Prompt:

Going to the movies is a major source of entertainment for many students. Imagine that the only discount movie theater in your area is closing.

Write a persuasive essay in support of keeping the discount movie theater open.

Paper Meets the standard

<i>Ideas & Content</i> 6 <u>5</u> 4 3 2 1	<i>Organization</i> 6 5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1	<i>Voice</i> 6 5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1
<i>Word Choice</i> 6 5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1	<i>Sentence Fluency</i> 6 5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1	<i>Conventions</i> 6 5 <u>4</u> 3 2 1

The underlined passages are taken from the *Official Scoring Guide for AIMS Writing* (Six Trait Rubric). Papers are original samples of Arizona student writing. Identifying information has been removed.

Ideas and Content: Main ideas stand out and are developed by supporting details suitable to audience and purpose. The writer's creative use of resources provides strong, credible support. The quotes from concerned citizens are appropriate and supportive. **Score point is 5.**

Organization: Order and structure are present but seem formulaic. The writer attempts to offer both sides of an argument, but this organization weakens the original stance. However, the body is easy to follow with details that fit where placed. **Score point is 4.**

Voice: There is a sense of audience and the writer seems to be aware of the reader. A voice is present. However, at times the writing is inappropriately formal and stiff. "Many would be willing to take matters farther than the town's hands and into the state's." **Score point is 4.**

Word Choice: Words effectively convey the intended message. Attempts at colorful language are occasionally overdone. "A multitude of people..." "the town governors..." "without consenting the people..." Other words are vague and weaken the argument: "many" is overused. **Score point is 4.**

Sentence Fluency: Sentence patterns are varied and contribute to ease in oral reading. The writer has occasional lapses in stylistic control; dialogue sounds natural. Examples of sentences in need of revision for style: "Another main reason people don't want Discount Flicks to close is because for many people, this is the main source of entertainment on weekends, or on days off." And "In conclusion, the question, 'would it be right to close Discount Flicks without consenting the people first?' is simply answered no, even though some may disagree, majority rules, especially if it's a very large majority." **Score point is 4.**

Conventions: The writing demonstrates control over standard writing conventions. Minor errors do not impede readability. The writer uses sound paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure. **Score point is 4.**

Sample 4A

Writing

FINAL COPY

4-21-04
Phoenix, AZ
5551124
M Lane
Dear owner of the discount movie theater,
I had just recently heard about the discount movie theater
being closed. This makes me furious! My family and friends have
been going to this theater for ages now. I can't believe that you're
closing it down! It's the only discount theater that will give us a
tremendous discount. I am ashamed that after five years of
terrific service in the neighborhood you will take it away from
all of us who greatly appreciate it.
One of the reasons why I don't want the theater to close
is because it always comes out with the best movies first. Your
discount movie theater came out with <u>Jurassic Park III</u> , <u>Terminator</u>
<u>the Rise of the Machines</u> , and <u>The Perfect Storm</u> before any of the
other movie theaters in our area. You should be proud of that!
The employees there are the most extravagant and brilliant
people I have ever met. The employees there are also the first
employees I have ever met that actually knew what they were
doing behind the counter. One of the greatest things that anyone
can get at your discount movie theater is an extremely warm
welcome.
Another thing that makes me proud of your movie

Page 4

Go On 

Sample 4B

Writing

FINAL COPY

theater is the fact that the equipment there is the most reliable equipment I have ever seen in any movie theater. I love knowing that I could always go to your theater and know that nothing will be broken or out of order.

I don't know about you but I love to feel safe when I go to a movie theater. That's another thing that I love about your movie theater is the fact that it is the safest one I have ever gone to. I love to know that no one will start any trouble there.

Have you ever gone to a movie theater and went into the bathroom? Did you see gum on the walls and graffiti everywhere? You probably did. That's one other reason why I enjoy your theater so much is because it is so well maintained. You can walk into the bathroom and be blinded by the spectacular white shine!

I know you have your reasons for closing the discount movie theater, but it has been such a great place of our lives, so please don't close the discount movie theater.

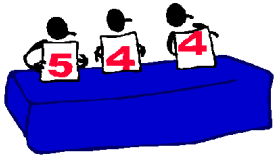
One of your movie theaters' greatest fans

M

P

M

P



Score Sheet for Writing Sample 4

Prompt:

Going to the movies is a major source of entertainment for many students. Imagine that the only discount movie theater in your area is closing. Write a persuasive essay in support of keeping the discount movie theater open.

Paper Exceeds the standard

<i>Ideas & Content</i> ⑥ 5 4 3 2 1	<i>Organization</i> ⑥ 5 4 3 2 1	<i>Voice</i> 6 ⑤ 4 3 2 1
<i>Word Choice</i> 6 5 ④ 3 2 1	<i>Sentence Fluency</i> ⑥ 5 4 3 2 1	<i>Conventions</i> 6 ⑤ 4 3 2 1

The underlined passages are taken from the *Official Scoring Guide for AIMS Writing* (Six Trait Rubric). Papers are original samples of Arizona student writing. Identifying information has been removed.

Ideas and Content: Main ideas stand out and are developed by strong support and rich details suitable to audience and purpose. The writer carefully explores each idea and supports with clarity and strength. “One of the greatest things that anyone can get at your discount theater is an extremely warm welcome.” **Score point is 6.**

Organization: The order and structure are compelling and move the reader through the text easily. The paper has a strong beginning and a satisfying sense of closure. The writer provides smooth, effective transitions among all elements. While the writer uses traditional transitions such as “one of the reasons...” and “Another thing...,” the subtle, contextual flow of the ideas between paragraphs four and five, and five and six is well done. **Score point is 6.**

Voice: The writer seems committed to the topic, and there is a sense of “writing to be read.” The writing shows originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, and excitement. However, the writer should be cautious about the tone set in the first paragraph. It appears at first to be more angry than appropriate for audience and purpose. **Score point is 5.**

Word Choice: Words effectively convey the intended message. The writing has some fine moments and avoids clichés. The writer employs attempts at colorful language that are overdone. Words such as “furious” and “ashamed” in paragraph one detract from the effective “extremely warm welcome” in paragraph three and “blinded by spectacular light” in paragraph five. Word choice is close to a five, but **Score point is 4.**

Sentence Fluency: The writing has an easy flow and rhythm; expressive oral reading is easy and enjoyable. The writer uses variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text. The rhetorical questions with a short answer are quite effective in paragraph six. **Score point is 6.**

Conventions: The writing demonstrates control of standard writing conventions, and paragraph breaks reinforce the organizational structure. While one or two errors are detected, there is little need for editing. **Score point is 5.**

AIMS Six Trait Analytic Writing Rubric – Official Scoring Guide

IDEAS and CONTENT

<p>6</p> <p>The writing is exceptionally clear, focused and interesting. It holds the reader's attention throughout. Main ideas stand out and are developed by strong support and rich details suitable to audience and purpose. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity, focus, and control. • main idea(s) that stand out. • supporting, relevant, carefully selected details; when appropriate, use of resources provides strong, accurate, credible support • a thorough, balanced, in-depth explanation/ exploration of the topic; the writing makes connections and shares insights. • content and selected details that are well suited to audience and purpose. 	<p>5</p> <p>The writing is clear, focused and interesting. It holds the reader's attention. Main ideas stand out and are developed by supporting details suitable to audience and purpose. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity, focus, and control. • main idea(s) that stand out. • supporting, relevant, carefully selected details; when appropriate, use of resources provides strong, accurate, credible support. • a thorough, balanced explanation/exploration of the topic; the writing makes connections and shares insights. • content and selected details that are well-suited to audience and purpose. 	<p>4</p> <p>The writing is clear and focused. The reader can easily understand the main ideas. Support is present, although it may be limited or rather general. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an easily identifiable purpose. • clear main idea(s) • supporting details that are relevant, but may be overly general or limited in places; when appropriate, resources are used to provide accurate support. • a topic that is explored/explained, although developmental details may occasionally be out of balance with the main idea(s); some connections and insights may be present. • content and selected details that are relevant, but perhaps not consistently well chosen for audience and purpose.
<p>3</p> <p>The reader can understand the main ideas, although they may be overly broad or simplistic, and the results may not be effective. Supporting detail is often limited, insubstantial, overly general, or occasionally slightly off-topic. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an easily identifiable purpose and main idea(s). • predictable or overly-obvious main ideas or plot; conclusions or main points seem to echo observations heard elsewhere. • support that is attempted; but developmental details that are often limited in scope, uneven, somewhat off-topic, predictable, or overly general. • details that may not be well-grounded in credible resources; they may be based on clichés, stereotypes or questionable sources of information. • difficulties when moving from general observations to specifics. 	<p>2</p> <p>Main ideas and purpose are somewhat unclear or development is attempted but minimal. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a purpose and main idea(s) that may require extensive inferences by the reader. • minimal development; insufficient details. • irrelevant details that clutter the text. • extensive repetition of detail. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing lacks a central idea or purpose. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ideas that are extremely limited or simply unclear. • attempts at development that are minimal or non-existent; the paper is too short to demonstrate the development of an idea.

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AIMS Six Trait Analytic Writing Rubric – Official Scoring Guide

ORGANIZATION

<p>6</p> <p>The organization enhances the central idea(s) and its development. The order and structure are compelling and move the reader through the text easily. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective, perhaps creative, sequencing; the organizational structure fits the topic, and the writing is easy to follow. • a strong, inviting beginning that draws the reader in and a strong satisfying sense of resolution or closure. • smooth, effective transitions among all elements (sentences, paragraphs, and ideas). • details that fit where placed. 	<p>5</p> <p>The organization enhances the central idea(s) and its development. The order and structure are strong and move the reader through the text. The writing is characterized by.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective sequencing; the organizational structure fits the topic, and the writing is easy to follow. • an inviting beginning that draws the reader in and a satisfying sense of resolution or closure. • smooth, effective transitions among all elements (sentences, paragraphs, and ideas). • details that fit where placed. 	<p>4</p> <p>Organization is clear and coherent. Order and structure are present, but may seem formulaic. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear sequencing. • an organization that may be predictable. • a recognizable, developed beginning that may not be particularly inviting; a developed conclusion that may lack subtlety. • a body that is easy to follow with details that fit where placed. • transitions that may be stilted or formulaic. • organization which helps the reader, despite some weaknesses.
<p>3</p> <p>An attempt has been made to organize the writing; however, the overall structure is inconsistent or skeletal. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attempts at sequencing, but the order or the relationship among ideas may occasionally be unclear. • a beginning and an ending which, although present, are either undeveloped or too obvious (e.g. “My topic is...”, “These are all the reasons that...”) • transitions that sometimes work. The same few transitional devices (e.g., coordinating conjunctions, numbering, etc.) may be overused. • a structure that is skeletal or too rigid. • placement of details that may not always be effective. • organization which lapses in some places, but helps the reader in others. 	<p>2</p> <p>The writing lacks a clear organizational structure. An occasional organizational device is discernible; however, the writing is either difficult to follow and the reader has to reread substantial portions, or the piece is simply too short to demonstrate organizational skills. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some attempts at sequencing, but the order or the relationship among ideas is frequently unclear. • a missing or extremely undeveloped beginning, body, and/or ending. • a lack of transitions, or when present, ineffective or overused. • a lack of an effective organizational structure. • details that seem to be randomly placed, leaving the reader frequently confused. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing lacks coherence; organization seems haphazard and disjointed. Even after rereading, the reader remains confused. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a lack of effective sequencing. • a failure to provide an identifiable beginning, body and/or ending. • a lack of transitions. • pacing that is consistently awkward; the reader feels either mired down in trivia or rushed along too rapidly. • a lack of organization which ultimately obscures or distorts the main point.

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AIMS Six Trait Analytic Writing Rubric – Official Scoring Guide

VOICE

<p>6</p> <p>The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose and audience. The writer seems deeply committed to the topic, and there is an exceptional sense of “writing to be read.” The writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an effective level of closeness to or distance from the audience (e.g., a narrative should have a strong personal voice, while an expository piece may require extensive use of outside resources and a more academic voice; nevertheless, both should be engaging, lively, or interesting. Technical writing may require greater distance.). • an exceptionally strong sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader and of how to communicate the message most effectively. The reader may discern the writer behind the words and feel a sense of interaction. • a sense that the topic has come to life; when appropriate, the writing may show originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, excitement, humor, or suspense. 	<p>5</p> <p>The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. The writer seems committed to the topic, and there is a sense of “writing to be read.” The writing is expressive, engaging or sincere. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an appropriate level of closeness to or distance from the audience (e.g., a narrative should have a strong personal voice while an expository piece may require extensive use of outside resources and a more academic voice; nevertheless, both should be engaging, lively or interesting. Technical writing may require greater distance.). • a strong sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader and of how to communicate the message most effectively. The reader may discern the writer behind the words and feel a sense of interaction. • a sense that the topic has come to life; when appropriate, the writing may show originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, excitement, humor, or suspense. 	<p>4</p> <p>A voice is present. The writer demonstrates commitment to the topic, and there may be a sense of “writing to be read.” In places, the writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a questionable or inconsistent level of closeness to or distance from the audience. • a sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader but has not consistently employed an appropriate voice. The reader may glimpse the writer behind the words and feel a sense of interaction in places. • liveliness, sincerity, or humor when appropriate; however, at times the writing may be either inappropriately casual or personal, or inappropriately formal and stiff.
<p>3</p> <p>The writer’s commitment to the topic seems inconsistent. A sense of the writer may emerge at times; however, the voice is either inappropriately personal or inappropriately impersonal. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a limited sense of audience; the writer’s awareness of the reader is unclear. • an occasional sense of the writer behind the words; however, the voice may shift or disappear a line or two later and the writing become somewhat mechanical. • a limited ability to shift to a more objective voice when necessary. 	<p>2</p> <p>The writing provides little sense of involvement or commitment. There is no evidence that the writer has chosen a suitable voice. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little engagement of the writer; the writing tends to be largely flat, lifeless, stiff, or mechanical. • a voice that is likely to be overly informal and personal. • a lack of audience awareness; there is little sense of “writing to be read.” • little or no hint of the writer behind the words. There is rarely a sense of interaction between reader and writer. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing seems to lack a sense of involvement or commitment. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no engagement of the writer; the writing is flat and lifeless. • a lack of audience awareness; there is no sense of “writing to be read.” • no hint of the writer behind the words. There is no sense of interaction between writer and reader; the writing does not involve or engage the reader.

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WORD CHOICE

<p>6</p> <p>Words convey the intended message in an exceptionally interesting, precise, and natural way appropriate to audience and purpose. The writer employs a rich, broad range of words, which have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed for impact. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate, strong, specific words; powerful words energize the writing. • fresh, original expression; slang, if used, seems purposeful and is effective. • vocabulary that is striking and varied, but that is natural and not overdone. • ordinary words used in an unusual way. • words that evoke strong images; figurative language may be used. 	<p>5</p> <p>Words convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way appropriate to audience and purpose. The writer employs a broad range of words which have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed for impact. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate, specific words; word choices energize the writing. • fresh, vivid expression; slang, if used, seems purposeful and is effective. • vocabulary that may be striking and varied, but that is natural and not overdone. • ordinary words used in an unusual way. • words that evoke clear images; figurative language may be used. 	<p>4</p> <p>Words effectively convey the intended message. The writer employs a variety of words that are functional and appropriate to audience and purpose. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words that work but do not particularly energize the writing. • expression that is functional; however, slang, if used, does not seem purposeful and is not particularly effective. • attempts at colorful language that may occasionally seem overdone. • occasional overuse of technical language or jargon. • rare experiments with language; however, the writing may have some fine moments and generally avoids clichés.
<p>3</p> <p>Language is quite ordinary, lacking interest, precision and variety, or may be inappropriate to audience and purpose in places. The writer does not employ a variety of words, producing a sort of “generic” paper filled with familiar words and phrases. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words that work, but that rarely capture the reader’s interest. • expression that seems mundane and general; slang, if used, does not seem purposeful and is not effective. • attempts at colorful language that seem overdone or forced. • words that are accurate for the most part, although misused words may occasionally appear, technical language or jargon may be overused or inappropriately used. • reliance on clichés and overused expressions. 	<p>2</p> <p>Language is monotonous and/or misused, detracting from the meaning and impact. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words that are colorless, flat or imprecise. • monotonous repetition or overwhelming reliance on worn expressions that repeatedly distract from the message. • images that are fuzzy or absent altogether. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing shows an extremely limited vocabulary or is so filled with misuses of words that the meaning is obscured. Only the most general kind of message is communicated because of vague or imprecise language. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general, vague words that fail to communicate. • an extremely limited range of words. • words that simply do not fit the text; they seem imprecise, inadequate, or just plain wrong.

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SENTENCE FLUENCY

<p>6</p> <p>The writing has an effective flow and rhythm. Sentences show a high degree of craftsmanship, with consistently strong and varied structure that makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a natural, fluent sound; it glides along with one sentence flowing effortlessly into the next. • extensive variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text. • sentence structure that enhances meaning by drawing attention to key ideas or reinforcing relationships among ideas. • varied sentence patterns that create an effective combination of power and grace. • strong control over sentence structure; fragments, if used at all, work well. • stylistic control; dialogue, if used, sounds natural. 	<p>5</p> <p>The writing has an easy flow and rhythm. Sentences are carefully crafted, with strong and varied structure that makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a natural, fluent sound; it glides along with one sentence flowing into the next. • variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text. • sentence structure that enhances meaning. • control over sentence structure; fragments, if used at all, work well. • stylistic control; dialogue, if used sounds natural. 	<p>4</p> <p>The writing flows; however, connections between phrases or sentences may be less than fluid. Sentence patterns are somewhat varied, contributing to ease in oral reading. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a natural sound; the reader can move easily through the piece, although it may lack a certain rhythm and grace. • some repeated patterns of sentence structure, length, and beginnings that may detract somewhat from overall impact. • strong control over simple sentence structures, but variable control over more complex sentences; fragments, if present, are usually effective. • occasional lapses in stylistic control; dialogue, if used, sounds natural for the most part, but may at times sound stilted or unnatural.
<p>3</p> <p>The writing tends to be mechanical rather than fluid. Occasional awkward constructions may force the reader to slow down or reread. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some passages that invite fluid oral reading; however, others do not. • some variety in sentences structure, length, and beginnings, although the writer falls into repetitive sentence patterns. • good control over simple sentence structures, but little control over more complex sentences; fragments, if present, may not be effective. • sentences which, although functional, lack energy. • lapses in stylistic control; dialogue, if used, may sound stilted or unnatural. 	<p>2</p> <p>The writing tends to be either choppy or rambling. Awkward constructions often force the reader to slow down or reread. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant portions of the text that are difficult to follow or read aloud. • sentence patterns that are monotonous (e.g., subject-verb or subject-verb-object). • a significant number of awkward, choppy, or rambling constructions. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing is difficult to follow or to read aloud. Sentences tend to be incomplete, rambling, or very awkward. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text that does not invite—and may not even permit—smooth oral reading. • confusing word order that is often jarring and irregular. • sentence structure that frequently obscures meaning. • sentences that are disjointed, confusing, or rambling.

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CONVENTIONS

<p>6</p> <p>The writing demonstrates exceptionally strong control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph breaks, grammar and usage) and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Errors are so few and so minor that the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong control of conventions; manipulation of conventions may occur for stylistic effect. • strong, effective use of punctuation that guides the reader through the text. • correct spelling, even of more difficult words. • paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure. • correct grammar and usage that contribute to clarity and style. • skill in using a wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece. • little or no need for editing. 	<p>5</p> <p>The writing demonstrates strong control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph breaks, grammar and usage) and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Errors are so few and so minor that they do not impede readability. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong control of conventions. • effective use of punctuation that guides the reader through the text. • correct spelling, even of more difficult words. • paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure. • correct capitalization; errors, if any, are minor. • correct grammar and usage that contribute to clarity and style. • skill in using a wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece. • little need for editing. 	<p>4</p> <p>The writing demonstrates control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph breaks, grammar and usage). Minor errors, while perhaps noticeable, do not impede readability. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • control over conventions used, although a wide range is not demonstrated. • correct end-of-sentence punctuation, internal punctuation may sometimes be incorrect. • spelling that is usually correct, especially on common words. • basically sound paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure. • correct capitalization; errors, if any, are minor. • occasional lapses in correct grammar and usage; problems are not severe enough to distort meaning or confuse the reader. • moderate need for editing.
<p>3</p> <p>The writing demonstrates limited control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraph breaks, grammar and usage). Errors begin to impede readability. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some control over basic conventions; the text may be too simple to reveal mastery. • end-of-sentence punctuation that is usually correct; however, internal punctuation contains frequent errors. • spelling errors that distract the reader; misspelling of common words occurs. • paragraphs that sometimes run together or begin at ineffective places. • capitalization errors. • errors in grammar and usage that do not block meaning but do distract the reader. • significant need for editing. 	<p>2</p> <p>The writing demonstrates little control of standard writing conventions. Frequent, significant errors impede readability. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little control over basic conventions. • many end-of-sentence punctuation errors; internal punctuation contains frequent errors. • spelling errors that frequently distract the reader; misspelling of common words often occurs. • paragraphs that often run together or begin in ineffective places. • capitalization that is inconsistent or often incorrect. • errors in grammar and usage that interfere with readability and meaning. • substantial need for editing. 	<p>1</p> <p>Numerous errors in usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. In fact, the severity and frequency of errors are so overwhelming that the reader finds it difficult to focus on the message and must reread for meaning. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very limited skill in using conventions. • basic punctuation (including end-of-sentence punctuation) that tends to be omitted, haphazard, or incorrect. • frequent spelling errors that significantly impair readability. • paragraph breaks that may be highly irregular or so frequent (every sentence) that they bear no relation to the organization of the text. • capitalization that appears to be random. • a need for extensive editing.

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